

Benin / Cameroon / Mali

BRAVE (Building RESILIENT AND Viable Media)

The Brave Media project, co-funded by the European Commission, is a global initiative aimed at strengthening the resilience of independent public interest media in more than 20 countries in Africa, Latin America, Asia, and the Middle East. Led by BBC Media Action and implemented by a consortium of eight organizations, including Fondation Hironnelle, the project aims to consolidate the foundations of independent media in order to guarantee free access to reliable information, support democratic values, and ensure that journalists can continue to work in the public interest without fear or interference. Fondation Hironnelle works in Cameroon, Benin, and Mali with nine partners, including three umbrella organizations, mainly through the provision of grants and tailored support for the implementation of micro-projects.



The BRAVE project supports independent and public interest media in more than 20 countries.

Map: BBC Media Action.

FH ANNUAL BUDGET

225'000 CHF

SOURCES OF FUNDING

- European Union

Key FIGURES 2025



3 selected
umbrella
organizations



6 partner radio
stations supported



9 cascade grants
awarded

More information about the project is available at
www.hirondelle.org.

ACHIEVEMENT 2025

Context

In Benin, Mali, and Cameroon, independent media operate in contexts marked by political transitions, security tensions, and strong economic pressure. While Benin enjoys relative stability, the media landscape there is tightly regulated and financially fragile. In Mali and Cameroon, security instability and restrictions on freedom of expression complicate the work of journalists. In all three countries, despite the constraints, local media outlets are demonstrating resilience and remain key players in public debate and social cohesion.

Supporting resilient and sustainable media

In 2025, Fondation Hironde launched and structured the grant mechanism in the three countries of intervention. After a careful selection process, Fondation Hironde, the media, and umbrella organizations jointly developed tailor-made micro-projects aimed at strengthening their organizational capacities, promoting gender equality, and increasing their resilience to disinformation. In Cameroon, for example, the micro-project provides support to young journalists through a mentoring system and strengthen ties between the media and civil society.

Fondation Hironde also oversaw an innovative pilot initiative in Benin to improve the economic viability of independent media. The goal was to create a unique coalition bringing together media outlets, research institutions, and advertising agencies to boost the local advertising market.

Two experts were brought in to conduct a strategic study that will pave the way for a replicable model in the subregion.

In Benin, the micro-project of the Federation of Community and Similar Radio Stations of Benin (FeRCAB) aims to support a network of professional women in the media by promoting female leadership in community radio stations through skills development and the production of gender-sensitive content.

TESTIMONIAL

"I understood the importance of collaborating more effectively as a journalist with civil society organizations, in order to be closer to the realities on the ground."

A journalist of Radio Manjara,
Yaoundé, December 2025

DEVELOPMENT 2026/2027

In 2026, BRAVE will embark on a phase of intensified deployment, focused on the structural strengthening of partners and their ramp-up, as well as the sustainable consolidation of projects.

The micro-projects will be fully operational in all three countries, with close monthly monitoring of all beneficiary media outlets to ensure quality, impact, and accountability.

Three progressive training cycles will be offered to partner radio stations, based on needs identified in the field and adjusted throughout the evaluations, to strengthen their editorial, organizational, and strategic capacities.

At the same time, umbrella organizations will receive the same structured support—regular monitoring and dedicated training sessions—to consolidate their role in supporting and advocating for the sector.

Finally, audience studies will be conducted in Benin and Cameroon to better understand the expectations of the public. The results will be presented in workshops to provide concrete input for the editorial choices and development strategies of partner media outlets.

PRIORITIES

- ▶ Support the production and dissemination of local information that is useful to the population.
- ▶ Develop and test a pilot initiative aimed at improving media sustainability in Benin

ACTIVITIES

- ▶ Editorial training and coaching
- ▶ Audience studies

BENEFICIARIES

The Fondation Hironnelle activities target audiences in Cameroon, Benin, and Mali, including those in remote or rural areas, as well as groups that are particularly vulnerable to the harm caused by disinformation and misinformation. The project strengthens the capacity of local media to provide them with reliable, balanced, and relevant content, enabling them to make informed decisions on issues that affect their lives and hold those in power to account.

DRIVERS OF CHANGE

- Structuring sectoral organizations and strengthening their advocacy, coordination, and representation capacities.
- Organizational and strategic strengthening of independent media through support in the implementation of micro-projects.

FOLLOW BRAVE NEWS ON THE WEBSITE WWW.HIRONDELLE.ORG



A reporter from Studio Tamani on assignment in Bamako Coura
collects a resident's testimony about the realities of his daily life. ©
Harandane Dicko

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